

**NEW ENGLAND LABORERS'/CRANSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CONSTRUCTION CAREER ACADEMY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING**

AUGUST 25, 2011

12 Noon Executive Session

Public Session Immediately Following

NEL/CPS Construction Career Academy

Conference Room – 4 Sharpe Drive

Cranston, RI 02920

MINUTES

This meeting of the NEL/CPS Construction Career Academy was held on the above date in the conference room with the following members present: Mr. Traficante, Mr. Nero, Mr. Cardi, Mr. Jay Sabitoni, Ms. Larkin arrived at 12:14 p.m. (in place of Mr. Bowling), Mrs. DeSimone and Dr. Leone. Mrs. McFarland was absent with cause.

Chairman Traficante called the meeting to order at 12:07 p.m. A motion was made by Mr. Sabitoni to go into Executive Session pursuant to R.I. State Laws PL 42-46-5 (a)(1) Personnel and PL 42-46-5 (a)(2) Collective Bargaining and Litigation. This was seconded by Dr. Leone. All were in favor.

Chairman Traficante reconvened public session at 12:12 p.m. The roll was called; a quorum was present. No votes were taken in Executive

Session.

A motion to seal the minutes of Executive Session was made by Mr. Sabitoni and seconded by Mr. Cardi; all were in favor.

Minutes of Previous Meeting(s) Approved – August 3, 2011. A motion was made by Dr. Leone to approve the minutes of the August 3rd, 2011 meeting. This was seconded by Mr. Cardi. All were in favor.

There were no speakers or public acknowledgements/communications.

Personnel

Resolutions

No. 8-1-11 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Board of Directors the appointment of Executive Director to the NEL/CPS Construction Career Academy be approved for the 2011-2012 school year:

Dennis Curran, Executive Director

Effective Date: August 15, 2011

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A motion was made by Mr. Sabitoni to approve this appointment and

seconded by Dr. Leone. Discussion:

Chairman Traficante handed out (see handout #1) a Media Advisory Press Release.

It depicts his experience in the educational arena as well as with the Laborers. It also includes statements from Mr. Sabitoni, Mr. Nero and me. This advisory was sent to the Providence Journal, The Cranston Herald, The Business News and Cranston Patch and hopefully it will be placed in the newspaper very shortly.

Mr. Nero stated I am very impressed and thrilled that you (referring to Mr. Curran) that you have accepted our offer and I know you are going to be a heck of an addition here. You understand what it takes to run a school and be a principal. You understand special education, principalship; scheduling and you've taken schools and improved their test scores. We want to compound the good things that they do here with improvement in our test scores in math and science. We want to give our students the opportunities that all of our students have. The fact of the matter is, many of the students that come here do not do well in a regular school setting and I think that will bring a nice blend of improved academics along with a great rapport that exists so I am pleased that you are going to be part of the administration here.

Mr. Sabitoni stated – obviously your interview left us all very impressed with your background. You are up for the challenges that this school faces, I think your background as a Construction Craft

Laborer speaks volumes from where you have come full circle in your life. The career you have had as a laborer, your successes in education and we are very happy to have someone of your diverse background leading this school and meeting the challenges facing us down the road. Welcome and I look forward to working with you.

Dr. Leone stated the work that this school does on a daily basis is very impressive. We have met challenges and I think you will be a great asset to this school.

Mr. Traficante stated – Dennis, I have told you personally this week how impressed I am with what you've done in a short period of time. You are a welcome site especially during this point in time when we are facing a very crucial situation. I am looking forward to working with you.

Mr. Curran stated – I appreciate all the kind sentiments here and hopefully you will see that I will live up to the expectations that you have as a Board. This school represents a very unique knish in public education and I've been in public education for a long time and only public education in a variety of positions and as Jay said, in concurrent with that I was in The Laborers' Union and a thirty year member of Local 547 out of New London which steeled me well for what the workforce needs in our students.

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When this position was advertised back in June I believe it was the first time I saw it, maybe it was May, I just thought this is just too perfect with my background both in administration and education and The Laborers' Union it just spoke to me that this was a position I had to apply for. Most recently I was principal of Westerly Middle School for five years where I had 1,000 students in grades 5 through 8 and 115 staff members so as Peter said I do have a proven track record of improving test scores in the schools that I have been in and in Connecticut two of my middle schools were selected Middle School of the Year while I was principal there. I am very proud of that as well. I know how to work with the staff to improve the school, the culture of the school, the academics of the school, and the behavior of the school. It is what I have done over my career as an administrator and I look forward to that challenge here at the academy. Before I came to the interview I did some research about the academy in various sectors of not only with the website but also on RIDE looking at InfoWorks in trying to get some data on the school and I did learn that academically we do have a challenging group here and we have test scores that do need to be improved. We can't escape that and as much as we don't want to focus on that certainly as a single indicator of school success, we still have to stay we need to improve our test scores. They certainly have nowhere to go but up at this point in time and that will be something that we will be working hard on and focusing on and although we won't see the immediate results in time

for our re-charter, I hope that when the results come out in February that they will be better still than the ones we saw last February. But that is a multi-year plan, we're not going to turnaround the NECAP scores overnight but we can turn them around in a fairly short time by making some changes in our programs and in our systems in how we operate. That is something the staff and I will work very hard to do.

In addition to that we have very challenging situation facing us immediately and that is the re-chartering of this school and as you know this school went through what I would call a surprise visit in the late spring at which time we received a report that was not favorable and is of concern when the Board of Regents meets to look at our re-charter. There was a response from the school naturally and a very strong response from the school. At this point in time we haven't had a reaction from RIDE or from the Office of Transformation about that report so we really don't know what they are thinking at this point in time. I am trying to establish a meeting with them on September 7 at the Office of Transformation at RIDE at which time I have asked them to give us an update on our status for re-charter in terms of where they think we are headed and also in terms of a date for a dead-line for re-charter application. The application was due originally back in July and we were granted an extension until late August and I called last week when I came onboard and asked them for yet another extension since we had no feedback from them and I did get an oral extension from them. When we meet with them on September 7th I want that in writing and I want a deadline of when they want the

report so we don't get sort of blindsided that we want the report tomorrow.

 

We are working on that application and we will continue to do so over the next couple of weeks and we will have a strong re-application for the charter here for the school. Then it will be our charge to defend that reapplication at the Board of Regents and hopefully Commissioner Gist will be supporting our re-charter. If not, then our responsibility is to counter that recommendation and make the case that we deserve to be re-chartered as a school.

There are great things going on at this school and I've already learned from many staff members that I have met here that this is a very committed faculty and that the challenges that they face every day in the classroom are ones they take on in a welcoming fashion, they work hard to give the kids what they need to be successful in the world of work and in the world of academics. If the last graduating class is any indicator of that we are meeting the mission objectives. We had more than half the students going on to higher education. A good number of graduates going on to technical schools, 9 or 11 going to the Apprenticeship Program and then a very small smattering of students who are still trying to figure it out. Well, that is a very good representation of a successful academic program here

and those are the statistics and that's the data that we are going to bring to the Board of Regents when we make our application for a re-charter and I think I am confident that we will be successful in getting that charter.

I thank you for your support and I look forward to working with you as a Board and with the administration as well, with my staff here and I can't wait to get started and I can't wait for the kids to come so thank you.

The roll was called:

Ms. Larkin Yes Mr. Cardi Yes

Ms. DeSimone Yes Dr. Leone Yes

Mr. Nero Yes Mr. Sabitoni Yes

Chairman Traficante Yes

All were in favor.

No. 8-2-11 – Resolved, that at the recommendation of the Executive Director, said certified personnel be recalled from layoff and

Be it further resolved that the Executive Director notify those individuals of the Board's actions.

Moved by Sabitoni, seconded by Mr. Nero. The roll was called; all were in favor.

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No. 8-3-11 – Resolved, that at the recommendation of the Executive Director, the following certified personnel be appointed for the 2011-2012 school year:

This resolution was withdrawn.

Old Business/New Business/Discussion

Mr. Traficante also stated he wrote a letter to Mr. Owen Heleen, The Rhode Island Foundation (see handout #2) thanking him for the grant award.

Mr. Pecorelli spoke about an email that was received (see handout #3) from a parent commending the school on the success of their child.

The next meeting will be held on September 27, 2011.

There being no further business to come before the Board a motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Sabitoni and seconded by Mr. Cardi. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

**Michael A. Traficante
Chairman**